

My name is Dr Jonna Cooley. I moved to Springfield in 1979, from a small Central IL village, to attend college. I am a graduate of Lincoln Land Community College, Sangamon State University and University of IL Springfield – where I also taught for 20 years. I have been in social services here in Sangamon County since 1986. For the past 16 years I have been the Executive Director of The Phoenix Center, Central Illinois' LGBT Center, where I work every day to improve the lives of the LGBT community in Sangamon County.

As a part of the LGBT community I have to say that growing up was pretty difficult. In those days, the only thing I heard about the LGBT community was negative and it made it difficult to be out and open. Today I live in Sangamon County with my beautiful wife. We have been together 21 years. Today we have a Center where people can get resources and the support that they need, we have had Springfield PrideFest since 2011, and for the most part, the community is very supportive. The Phoenix Center, in Sangamon County, is the only LGBT Center in Central and Southern IL! That is something to be PROUD of!

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